

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
ADVANCED TELEVISION SERVICE

PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes of the Ninth Meeting

1. The meeting was held on March 11, 1992, at the Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. The meeting opened at 10:09 a.m. and adjourned at 12:05 p.m.
2. The meeting was presided over by:  
  
Joseph Flaherty, Chair, Planning Subcommittee  
Margita White, Vice Chair, Planning Subcommittee
3. The designated Federal employee was William Hassinger, Assistant Chief, Mass Media Bureau. Richard Wiley, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service was also in attendance.
4. Chairman Flaherty started the meeting at 10:09 a.m. Copies of the Executive Summary of the Fifth Interim Report Of The Planning Subcommittee Of The FCC Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service (Planning Report) were made available to those in attendance. Chairman Flaherty said that the full Planning Report would be released before the March 24 meeting of the Advisory Committee.
5. The minutes of the eighth meeting (July 9, 1991) were adopted without modification.
6. Chairman Wiley acknowledged the continuing efforts of the Planning Subcommittee, and stated that the Advisory Committee is approaching the closing, "crucial stage" of activity. He reported that the Advanced Television Test Center (ATTC) is testing the fourth proponent system, and he expressed optimism about the potential test results.
7. Chairman Wiley indicated that the Advisory Committee will test only high definition television (HDTV) systems. He said that the Advanced Television Research Consortium (ATRC) has requested that the Advisory

Committee. Adoption of that Fifth Interim Report will be considered at the March 24, 1992, meeting of the full Advisory Committee. Additionally, Chairman Wiley announced that at the March 24 Advisory Committee meeting, members will vote on the formation and composition of a Special Advisory Panel aimed at providing expert technical evaluation and comparison of the proponent systems. He said that the Special Panel will be a subcommittee of the current Advisory Committee.

11. Donald Jansky and Jules Cohen, Vice Chairs of Working Party 3 (ATS Spectrum Utilization and Alternatives) summarized that member

channel spacing, and he reiterated the aim of avoiding increased interference to existing NTSC service caused by new ATV service. To determine the actual current level of interference in NTSC service, Mr. Cohen stated that Working Party 3 has relied on the laboratory tests conducted at ATTC, and on subjective tests of the impact of interference conducted by the Advanced Television Evaluation

computer programs cannot be finalized until the laboratory test results become available. Mr. Cohen underscored that proponent estimates as to the coverage and interference prospects cannot be verified until the test data is analyzed. He said that as soon as this data can be fed into the computer program, results will follow.

17. Chairman Flaherty asked that he be notified if any delays in receiving the data might compromise the results and hamper selection of a system. Mr. Cohen emphasized that Working Party 3 will not wait for all the test results to conduct its analysis, but that as the data comes in the analysis will be conducted. He indicated that hopefully, as the group reviews, for example, the fifth system, test data on the assignment and coverage characteristics of the first four proponent systems will be available.
18. Mr. Hassinger noted that until now, television has been a non-directional service, with allotments and assignments made on this basis. Accordingly, implicit in television assignments is the authority to go to maximum facilities (height and power) in a non-directional mode. Mr. Hassinger thus characterized the possibility of fitting in advanced television stations on a directional or contour protection basis, as a fundamental shift in policy. He described two effects that could result if the custom fitting takes place with the existing television stations at their actual facilities. First, referring to Mr. Cohen's remarks about possible trade-offs between ATV and NTSC service and potential interference problems, Mr. Hassinger said that the station receiving this interference could be viewed as subject to involuntary modification of its license, which could be authorized only through a Commission rulemaking. Second, Mr. Hassinger said that if an ATV station is installed such that its interference contour goes up to the limit of an NTSC station's service contour, consideration would have to be given to the effect on future expansion of the NTSC station. Thus, Mr. Hassinger recommended that if any such policy changes are anticipated, they should be brought to the Commission's attention as early as possible so that the rulemaking process involved can be initiated. Mr. Hassinger warned against too much detail planning, stating, for example, that many television stations may choose to build ATV facilities other than at the site of their NTSC station.
19. Mr. Cohen responded to Mr. Hassinger's concerns, observing that Working Party 3 considers use of directional antennas to squeeze in ATV assignments as a last resort. He said that the Working Party discussions center on the natural interference-free contour that flows from the allotment plan of having stations at particular locations with particular facilities. Mr. Cohen explained that, in talking about matching NTSC and ATV service, Working Party 3 refers to looking at the interference free service of the NTSC station and determining which of the ATV allotments best fits that particular NTSC assignment. He said that Working Party 3 hopes to avoid huge

delays caused by litigation following adoption of the Table of Assignments, by utilizing the technical flexibility offered in the 1990s and by recommending to the Commission a pairing assignment for an ATV and an NTSC station.

20. Chairman Flaherty stated that the future activities of Working Party 3 will focus chiefly on completion of the computer model. Also, Working Party 3 will continue to assist the Commission staff as needed in ATV-related negotiations with Mexico and Canada. Further, Chairman Flaherty said that Working Party 3 will conduct a review of long-term, post-NTSC spectrum efficiency. Specialist Group 3, having issued a report on auxiliary spectrum, will be consulting with the Commission to work out a solution to the problems described in the report.
21. Chairman Flaherty reported that Working Party 4 (Alternative Media Technology and Broadcasting Interface) has completed its work on a multi-port receiver and that work has now been transferred to EIA. Chairman Flaherty said that at the request of Chairman Wiley a special working group was formed, within Working Party 4, to expand the definition of interoperability, and to explore the extensibility, interoperability and scalability of the prevailing ATV system with media beyond television, cable, and direct broadcast satellite. Dennis Elliott, Secretary of that working group indicated that Working Party 4 membership has been expanded to include representatives from a broader spectrum of industry and Government. Mr. Elliott said that the group has studied and issued a report defining such terms as extensibility and scalability and has also reviewed the architecture of advanced television and the ability to bring other media into the realm of advanced television or vice versa. Mr. Elliott stressed the importance of digital technology to interoperability, noting that most of the proponent systems are digital. He added that Working Party 4 has recommended a digital approach to advanced television service, but acknowledged that, while a digital approach is an essential element in achieving interoperability, scalability and extensibility, it is not sufficient in itself to ensure these objectives.
22. Mr. Elliott also underscored the importance of using headers and descriptors, to label "image data." Chairman Flaherty buttressed this argument, stating that headers and descriptors are so fundamental that the Planning Report recommends that the Commission include headers and descriptors in the regulations for the transmitted data stream. Because of this recommendation, Chairman Flaherty added that a liaison has been appointed to work with the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) in this area.
23. Mr. Elliott spoke about the group's plan to first establish a baseline ATV system and then define a hierarchy to allow that

fundamental system to grow more complex using the same baseline standards developed today. Mr. Elliott indicated that as industry becomes aware of its increasing capability to add to the baseline system, an official process would need to be started to incorporate

United States.

26. Mr. Thorpe said that Working Party 5 also worked on computer models penetration scenarios, particularly on the consumer side, where future volume could be colossal. The work that had been done in this regard previously was based on certain assumptions, and, Mr. Thorpe noted, some of these assumptions are now being questioned. Thus, some of the assumptions are now being reconsidered, and the models amended accordingly.
27. Regarding the three criteria of chief concern to both Working Party 5 and SS/WP3, the cost of ATV implementation to broadcasters, the cost to consumers, and the cost to alternative media, Mr. Thorpe stated that the two groups, who have also been working with Implementation Subcommittee Working Party 2 (IS/WP2), Transition Scenarios, need input from the system proponents. Thus, he reported that the Working



30. Chairman Flaherty said that the next meeting of the Planning Subcommittee will probably be held in early Fall 1992. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Submitted:

William Hassinger  
William Hassinger

Approved:

J. A. Flaherty  
Joseph Flaherty, Chair  
Planning Subcommittee